

VZCZCXRO1469
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHRY #0070 0931513
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 021513Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2364
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS CONAKRY 000070

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W
DEPT FOR EB/IFD/OMA
DEPT FOR EB/ESC/IEC FOR PHAYMOND
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USTR FOR LAURIE ANN AGAMA
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO COMMERCE FOR SALIHA LOUCIF
TREASURY FOR OFFICE OF AFRICAN NATIONS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12598: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: MASS TRANSIT FOR GUINEA ON THE HORIZON

REF: CONAKRY 185

¶1. SUMMARY. According to a government contact at the Ministry of Transport, mass transit for Conakry is reportedly coming within two months. END SUMMARY.

¶2. On March 26, Econoff met with the Director General at the Ministry of Transport, Mamoudou Diallo, to discuss the long awaited arrival of donated buses for Guinea from India. Mr. Diallo confirmed that the 100 Ashok-Leyland buses will arrive by the end of April.

¶3. The Director General explained that the ECOWAS bank loaned Guinea eight million USD, but included a restriction requiring that the money be used to purchase goods from India. The money for the loan was provided by India to ECOWAS Bank. According to Diallo, Guinea bought 100 buses, with 70 to be used in Conakry, and 30 in the interior. He added that the GoG has consulted with an Ivoirian company regarding training, bus scheduling, fares, etc. The Director General said that a private operator will run the operation. He was emphatic that the private operator will not receive any gasoline subsidy, even though it may be difficult for the company to make money due to fare restrictions. For example, Diallo said that soldiers will likely not pay a fare, while students will likely pay a reduced fare.

¶4. However, Mr. Diallo said that the Ministry is hoping that the bus service will be profitable so that the operating company can contribute to the repayment of the loan. He did not specify how this would work. When asked about maintenance for the buses, Mr. Diallo said that the private company would be completely responsible for maintaining the fleet.

¶5. Mr. Diallo also revealed that the GoG plans to introduce maritime transport along Conakry's coast with small ferries, and rail service from Kaloum (city center) to Kagbelen (KM 36). He did not provide a time frame for these services, nor an indication of how they would be funded.

¶6. COMMENT: Once put into operation, the new buses will effectively be the first public transportation system in Conakry in years, aside from public taxis. Various government contacts have repeatedly said that providing bus service should provide some relief for the average Guinean with the end of the gasoline subsidy program. Once the buses are in service, long-term maintenance will be a challenge. In addition, Conakry's road infrastructure is not built to accommodate numerous large buses. There are only two main roads running the length of the city and traffic is already heavy. Finally, putting 70 buses into service could put numerous taxi drivers out of business, whose union is one of the more active and

vocal in the city. END COMMENT.

CARTER